USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service

Team Nutrition Training Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2019 Request for Applications

Catalog for Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 10.574

Dates:

Release Date: XXX XX, 201X

Application Due Date: 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), XXX XX, 201X

Anticipated Award Date: XXXX XX, 201X

NOTE: Information italicized should be addressed/completed by the Program area. Information in black should not be changed. If additional information is required it may be added.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

On December 31, 2017, Grants.gov officially retired the legacy .PDF application package as a method to apply for a Federal grant. This changed the way many Grants.gov users completed and submitted their grant applications.

For information on Workspace application process, visit:

https://grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

Application Checklist

This application checklist provides a list of the required documents; however FNS expects that applicants will read the entire RFA prior to the submission of their application.

In order to apply, **at least four weeks** prior to submission, you must have:
☐ Obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number;
☐ Registered the DUNS number into the System for Award Management (SAM); and,
☐ Registered in grants.gov.

When **preparing your application**, ensure:
☐ Your application format and narrative meet the requirements included in Section X "Application and Submission Information," including page limits, priorities outlined in Section X, and all necessary attachments.

When **preparing your budget,** ensure the following information is included:
☐ All key staff who are paid by this grant.
☐ The percentage of time the project director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents.
☐ Your organization's fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation.
☐ The type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds.
☐ Itemized travel expenses (including type of travel), travel justifications and basis for lodging estimates.
☐ Types of equipment and supplies, justifications, and estimates, ensuring that the budget is in line with the project description.
☐ Information for all contracts and justification for any sole-source contracts.
☐ Justification, description and itemized list of all consultant services.
☐ Indirect cost information (either a copy of a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or if no agreement exists, the basis of the indirect costs requested). If none requested, please indicate this in the budget narrative.

When **submitting** your application, ensure you have submitted the following:
☐ SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
☐ SF-424A – Budget Information and Instruction Form (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
☐ SF-424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (fillable PDF in Grants.gov)
☐ SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.
☐ FNS-906 - Grant Program Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire (in Appendix X)
☐ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (PDF - Upload using the "Add Attachments" button under SF-424 item #15)

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I.   PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

Program Description
A. Background and Legislative Authority

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the nutrition assistance programs of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The mission of FNS is to work with partners to provide food and nutrition education to people in need in a way that inspires public confidence and supports American agriculture.

Among these nutrition assistance programs are the Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Administered by State agencies, the Child Nutrition Programs help fight hunger and obesity by reimbursing organizations such as schools, child care centers, and after-school programs for providing nutritionally balanced meals to children at low or no cost. USDA established Team Nutrition as a comprehensive nutrition education initiative in 1995. The goal of Team Nutrition is to support the Child Nutrition Programs through training and technical assistance for foodservice professionals, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity. Since its inception, Team Nutrition has provided Team Nutrition Training Grant funds to State agencies that implement Child Nutrition Programs. These funds have helped States train school nutrition and child care professionals on meal pattern requirements, teach children about food and nutrition, and create environments that support healthy choices.

Team Nutrition Training Grants (TNTG) are authorized under Public Law 111–296, which amended Section 19 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. As authorized under Section 6(a)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 USC 1755(a)(3), FNS provides training and technical assistance for school foodservice, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and encourages school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity. These activities are implemented under the Agency's Team Nutrition initiative that is designed to improve children's lifelong eating and physical activity habits by using the principles of the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) worked cooperatively with the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) to develop and deliver the School Nutrition Strategies, Training, Action Plans, and Resources (STAR) training program for school nutrition managers. This training is designed to provide school nutrition managers with an innovative learning experience, tailored technical assistance, and the capacity to conduct trainings for frontline staff to enhance school meal quality and positive perceptions. The STAR training program was developed in 2018 and piloted with one State in October 2018.

B. School Nutrition E-STAR Overview

The School Nutrition Enhanced Strategies, Training, Action Plans, and Resources (E-STAR) workforce development and job skills training program is designed to provide managers with an innovative learning experience, tailored technical assistance, and the capacity to conduct skills-based trainings for frontline staff to enhance school meal quality. An emphasis on CTing and networking is a unique aspect of the program, such that School Nutrition Directors and/or Managers with supervisory experience, serve as trained Consultant Trainers (CTs) and provide guidance and support to the participating managers.

C. COMPARISON of STAR to E-STAR

A detailed chart outlining and comparing the components of STAR and E-STAR can be found in Appendix A.

D. Team Nutrition Grant Purpose

The purpose of this Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Team Nutrition Training Grant is for State Agencies (SA) to implement and evaluate the enhanced School Nutrition STAR Program within the National School Lunch Program. The Enhanced STAR (E-STAR) is a comprehensive training grant that awards funding to State agencies to support professional development and job-skills training to school nutrition managers and supports them in providing training to frontline staff, while using innovative approaches to evaluate training impacts on school meal quality.

Objectives

Below is a list of the Program objectives, which proposed activities should be clearly aligned to in the Activities/Indicators Tracker under Section II:

	Objectives
1.	To implement the E-STAR Program to increase school nutrition managers' and frontline staffs' knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy related to school meal quality.
2.	To engage school nutrition managers in implementing an action plan to achieve one SMART goal to improve students' perception of school meals and enhancing school meal quality.
3.	To assess activities and impacts that result from participation in E-STAR to inform best practices for training school meal professionals and increasing their capacity to improve school meals.

This Team Nutrition E-STAR grant will provide State agencies with funds to provide E-STAR training, award sub-grants to implement meal quality improvement strategies at the local level, and participate in a rigorous national evaluation of those strategies. As a benefit to grantees, States will receive:

✓ An exclusive certificate and designation for school nutrition managers that complete the program,

✓ Opportunities to attend national conferences and meetings; and

✓ National attention through FNS media channels.

The period of performance of the Team Nutrition E-STAR grant will be four years.

- Year 1: Program planning and evaluation design, recruitment of participants and CTs, coordination of training plan with ICN, development of evaluation instruments, IRB review board approval as necessary.
- Year 2: Program implementation and data collection.
- Year 3: Program implementation and data collection.
- Year 4: Data analysis and reporting.

E. E-STAR Program Description

The E-STAR Program takes an innovative and comprehensive approach to providing education, training, and ongoing professional development opportunities specific to school nutrition managers on key elements to improve meal quality. The program also extends learning opportunities, as managers deliver job skills trainings for school nutrition frontline staff who play an integral role in successful implementation of skills and strategies to support local-level program operations.

- **School Nutrition Professionals:** School nutrition professionals are school nutrition program employees at the district or school level who are administering or operating the school meals programs, such as the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), or who contract with a food service management company to provide school meals and manage aspects of school food service operations. In general, there are three job categories related to school food service operations: directors, managers, and frontline staff. At the local level, there are many different job titles of individuals who perform similar duties. The definitions below are general enough to cover most local school nutrition program employees:

  ✓ **Directors** plan, administer, implement, monitor, and evaluate all district-wide aspects of school nutrition programs.

  ✓ **Managers/Supervisors** have direct responsibility for the day-to-day operations at one or more school buildings. In this RFA, Managers/Supervisors will be referred to as Managers.

  ✓ **Frontline Staff** prepare and serve meals, process transactions at point of service, and review the free/reduced price applications, along with other routine work. Typically, frontline staff do not have management responsibilities.

Key Definitions:

- **Grantee:** State agency receiving Team Nutrition Training Grant E-STAR funds and implementing approved grant-funded activities.

- **ICN Trainer:** As part of this grant, the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) will provide Grantees with a trainer(s) for the following activities:
    - ✓ CT Orientation
    - ✓ School Nutrition E-STAR Manager Workshops

- **CTs:** Grantees will hire individuals with school nutrition supervisory experience (such as a School Nutrition Director or Manager) operating the National School Lunch Program to serve as CTs. These CTs may be retired School Nutrition Director or Managers. They may not be currently working as a School Food Services Director or Manager participating in E-STAR. CTs will be provided with additional training, attend the E-STAR workshop, and support school nutrition managers participating in the E-STAR training program over the grant period. The activities that CTs are involved in are expected to take a total of approximately 220 hours throughout the period of performance of this grant.

- **School Nutrition Frontline Staff:** Frontline Staff prepare and serve meals, process transactions at point of service, and review the free/reduced price applications, along with other routine work. Frontline staff participants are those individuals overseen by a School Nutrition Manager who is participating in E-STAR, they will receive a total of 4 hours of training (throughout the implementation portion of this grant) on meal quality (conducted by their supervisor) and will assist with implementing meal quality improvement strategies at their school.

- **School Nutrition Managers:** Managers have direct responsibility for the day-to-day operations at one or more school buildings. Managers who are selected to receive the training will receive approximately 44 hours of training by participating in the following activities:
    - ✓ Participating in the pre-workshop online courses;
    - ✓ Attending the E-STAR in-person workshop;
    - ✓ Developing an action plan to implement in a school where they work;
    - ✓ Participating in the VILTs, conducted by ICN;
    - ✓ Participating in CT/manager follow-up conference calls; and,
    - ✓ Providing training to their frontline staff.

Managers that are selected to serve as controls, would receive no E-STAR training or interventions.

- **Self-efficacy**: The belief individuals have in their own abilities to meet workplace challenges and complete a task successfully.

- **School Meal Quality:** Meal quality in School Food Service relates to the entire school nutrition program, starting with the time the food is received at delivery and continuing to the time the customer leaves the dining room. Meal quality is the characteristics of food that is acceptable to consumers. This includes external factors as appearance (size, shape, color, gloss, and consistency), texture, and flavor; factors such as federal grade standards (e.g. of eggs) and internal (chemical, physical, microbial).

  Each school nutrition program should set quality standards that can be used to evaluate each menu item to ensure that an acceptable standard is in place. The quality standards should become part of the standardized recipe, and all production staff should be familiar with each standard. Foods that do not meet the quality standard, should never be served to customers

  Food production is all about preparing and serving meals in the most efficient way. A well designed food production system provides an avenue for serving healthy, appealing, and safe meals to school customers. It provides the basis necessary for schools to produce the desired number of quality meals in a cost-effective manner.

  For the purposes of this E-STAR grant, Meal Quality training topics include, but are not limited to the following:
    - Food production and use of equipment
    - Knife skills
    - Appetizing and varied preparation and presentation of food
    - Meal service options
    - Cycle menus
    - Buying, proper food handling, ordering, rotation, and turnover of meal components
    - Menu Substitutions
    - Meal Pattern Flexibilities
    - Techniques to maintain quality on food and salad bars
    - Food Production Records/this RFA
    - Getting buy-in from school administration
    - Communication and customer service
    - Meal quality and acceptability
    - Strategies for student engagement in school nutrition
    - Knowing your customers
    - Student feedback and food promotion

- **Social Scientist:** A research and evaluation professional to be hired by the grantee or the grantee's academic/research collaborator to:

  ✓ Design and execute an evaluation plan, including, but not limited to, designing study methodology and sampling plan;

  ✓ Work with the grantee to recruit participants;

  ✓ Obtain Internal Review Board (IRB) approval for data collection;

  ✓ Work with FNS to develop or identify valid data-collection instruments;

  ✓ Conduct data collection activities and analysis; and

  ✓ Develop manuscripts and reports, based on study findings.

TNTG E-STAR Key Grant Elements:

1. **Action Plan Development-** In addition to participation in the E-STAR training program described in detail below, school nutrition managers are expected to leave the workshop with an action plan for specific school-based strategies that they believe will have a positive impact on meal quality and student perceptions of school meals.

2. **Sub-grants for school-based strategies-** To support the successful implementation of school-based strategies, Grantees may award sub-grants to SFAs participating in E-STAR. The Guidance for Interpreting Cost Principles for Grants and Sub-Grant Awards may provide more direction and can be found in APPENDIX B. Team Nutrition sub-grant funds may support the purchase of equipment in school meals operations. These sub-grants could be used to:

A: Retain school nutrition Managers participation in E-STAR.

B: To aid school nutrition Managers (experimental group) in the implementation of their action plan and SMART goal achievement to enhance meal quality.

C: To aid school nutrition Managers (Control Group) in their School Meal Program operations.

3. **Evaluation- DB**

E-STAR Components

The School Nutrition E-STAR training program offered through this grant includes the following strategic components:

1. **Pre-Requisite Online Courses**

All E-STAR CTs and school nutrition managers will complete two 1-hour online courses as workshop prerequisites: 1) Effective Facilitation Techniques, which will provide the tools and tips on how to effectively facilitate trainings, and 2) Development of an Action Plan, which will provide guidance on how to develop goals and strategies for an effective action plan. These online courses set the foundation for the hands-on training workshop and will be available at no cost through the ICN's E-Learning portal, designed for E-STAR.

Logistics

    a. Grantees are responsible for ensuring that all CTs and managers participate, as required, and complete all assignments.

2. **CT Orientation**

All E-STAR CTs will participate in a specialized full-day CT orientation led by an ICN trainer. This 8-hour orientation will cover facilitation techniques and mentoring expectations, and take place the day prior to the E-STAR Manager Workshops, in a location organized by the Grantee.

Logistics

    a. The CT Orientation will take place the day prior to the E-STAR Manager Workshops.

    b. The Grantee is responsible for securing appropriate training facilities for the Orientation.

    c. Grantees will be responsible for the CTs' travel costs including, but not limited to: transportation costs; hotel costs, and daily per diem.

    d. Grantees will be responsible for the coordination of all workshop logistics and travel plans, including (but not limited to): selecting training dates and locations (in collaboration with ICN), training facilities and technology equipment/access; coordinating CT travel, and ensuring each participant receives the E-STAR workshop materials.

3. **The School Nutrition E-STAR Manager Workshops**

All E-STAR CTs and school nutrition managers will attend a 2.5 day in-person training workshop. An ICN trainer will deliver standardized curriculum content that focuses on specific meal quality topics.

Training presentations will teach key concepts and demonstrate best practice strategies related to each of the meal quality topics. CTs will then lead small breakout sessions to allow for more detailed discussions, work with managers as they identify local challenges within the topic area, set goals to address their respective challenges, and develop action plans to enhance meal quality. School nutrition managers will also receive hands-on culinary job skills training to

further develop techniques in preparation and presentation of school meals. This in-person training will provide opportunities for school nutrition managers to demonstrate their ability to provide training to frontline staff by teaching a 15-minute lesson from the E-STARs Grab N Go Curriculum series, while receiving feedback from their peers attending the workshop. A list of topics covered in the Grab N Go series can be found in APPENDIX C. Based on the skills and ideas acquired through the training and best practices panel, managers will develop an individualized action plan of goals and strategies to take back to their respective school/district. Pre and post documentation is required.

Logistics

    a. ICN will provide trainers for this workshop. As part of this grant, ICN trainers will travel to the workshop location(s) and provide the full E-STAR CT training and E-STAR Manager Workshops, with no cost for the trainer's time or travel to the Grantee. Through this agreement, ICN trainer(s) will conduct the activities and provide and ship all workshop training materials. Food to be used in the training demonstrations/activities will be provided by the Grantee.

    b. The workshop will ideally take place during breaks when school is not in session or may be tacked on to State association meetings.

    c. Grantees will be responsible for the coordination of all workshop logistics and travel plans, including (but not limited to): selecting training dates and locations (in collaboration with ICN), training facilities and technology equipment/access, coordinating participant travel, and ensuring each participant receives the E-STAR workshop materials.

    d. The Grantee is responsible for securing appropriate training facilities for the orientation and E-STAR Managerial Workshops.

    e. Each workshop will include no more than 60 managers. Therefore, each Grantee will need to host 4 workshops to provide training to 200 managers.

    f. Grantees will be responsible for the CTs and managers travel costs including, but not limited to: airline and /local transportation costs; hotel costs and daily per diem.

4. **Virtual Instructor-Led Trainings (VILTs)**

All E-STAR CTs and managers will participate in six 1-hour interactive webinars developed and facilitated by ICN. The first three webinars will occur in year two of the grant, one of which will focus on marketing and communication strategies to improve students' perception of school meal quality. The next set of three webinars will occur in year three of the grant and will serve as an opportunity to provide "refresher" instruction on key curriculum topics. These webinars will also

serve as a forum for sharing ideas, educational resources, and best practices amongst school nutrition managers and CTs.

Logistics

    a. Grantees are responsible for ensuring that all CTs and managers participate, as required and complete all assignments.

5. **CT Follow-up**

Ongoing mentoring is a critical component of the E-STAR training program. Each school nutrition manager will be required to engage with their CT four times within a year during grant years two and three to provide progress updates on their action plan goals, work through any identified challenges related to conducting frontline staff trainings and implementing strategies, and share successes. CTs will reach out to their cohort of managers four times within the year two of the grant, at months 3, 6, 9, and 12 months following the in-person training workshop. The CT mentorship will continue, as managers engage with their CT at the 3, 6, 9, and 12 months marks in year 3.

Logistics

    a. Grantees are responsible for ensuring that all CTs and managers participate, as required and complete all assignments.

6. **Grab N Go Trainings for Frontline Staff**

All school nutrition managers will be required to conduct frontline staff trainings at one of their respective school sites in the two years following the in-person E-STAR workshop. In the second year of the grant, managers will deliver seven 15-minute trainings and in year three they will deliver nine. ICN will provide the training materials for the Grab N Go trainings and the manager will deliver the actual training. The trainings will focus on specific aspects of school meal quality to assist with implementation of the manager's action plan. A list of topics covered in the Grab N Go series can be found in APPENDIX C.

Logistics

    a. Grantees are responsible for ensuring that managers and frontline staff participate, as required and complete all assignments.

7. **Evaluation of School Nutrition E-STAR Training Program**

Grantees are required to work with a Social Scientist and FNS to design and execute an evaluation plan. This comprehensive evaluation must be rigorous in structure and include a randomized or quasi-experimental design.

    Logistics

a. Grantees are required to work with their research/academic collaborators, FNS, and FNS' evaluation contractor to define the study sample; identify the appropriate managers, including cross-referencing to ensure managers have not participated in previous ICN STAR activities.

b. Grantees will be responsible for all data collection.

c. Grantees are required to submit quarterly and annual performance reports.

TNTG E-STAR Activity Timeline

Grantees have some flexibility in scheduling activities over the grant period, within the following guidelines:

Year 1: Planning and Coordination

In order to ensure the quality of both the training initiative and its evaluation, the training workshop can be held no earlier than one year after grant award. During the first year, Grantees are expected to hire all key personnel, including the social scientist, as well as program CTs.

Grantees should also carry out key planning activities including arranging logistics for the training workshops. The system that will be used to monitor and track the attendance and participation of participants will also be developed during this year, with technical assistance from the evaluation contractor. Note that any similar activities (trainings and school-based interventions) shall also be tracked in control SFAs.

The social scientist will work closely with the FNS evaluation contractor to support the random selection process to participant and control groups. The grantee will actively work to recruit those selected and secure their commitment to participate in the evaluation. To the extent possible, the social scientist will begin the process for IRB approval for any data collections planned for the evaluation of school-based interventions.

Year 2: Training Workshops and Initiation of activities

All workshops should be completed early in the second year of the Grant period. Following the workshops, CTs and managers will carry out their responsibilities with respect to ongoing meetings, refresher webinars, and front-line staff trainings.

If made available by Grantees, participating managers will apply for sub-grants to support the school-based strategies identified in the action plan developed at the workshop.

The social scientist will coordinate with participating managers to identify key outcome measures associated with the strategies described in their action plan. The social scientist will,

with TA from the evaluation contractor, develop data collection plans for evaluating these strategies, finalize IRB approval, and begin to carry out data collection activities.

Year 3: Ongoing Training and School-based strategy implementation

Continued roll-out of training activities, and implementation of school-based strategies along with associated evaluation (data collection) activities.

Year 4:

Data collection and activities wrap up, and social scientist begins analysis and write-up of results.

A TNTG E-STAR Timeline Chart can be found in APPENDIX D.

Team Nutrition Training Grant E-STAR Logic Model needs to be updated by DB; placement TBD				
Inputs	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**		
		Short Term	**Intermediate**	**Long Term**

Grantee Staff
 	
ICN Trainers
 	
Grant Funds
 	
Grantee CTs
 	
Social Scientist
 	
School Nutrition Managers
 	
School Nutrition Frontline Staff
 	
Time
 	
E-STAR Program:
 	
  Manager Training
 	
  • 2 1-hour Online Courses
  • 2.5 Day Workshop
	Number and duration of CT/manager follow-ups.
	
	Number and hours of trainings completed by managers.
	
	Number and hours of trainings completed by frontline staff.
	
	Number of meal quality
		Increase in hours of training
		
		Number of meal quality improvement strategies implemented at schools.
		
		Increase in manager's knowledge skills and self-efficacy related to meal quality.
			Increase in knowledge of how to improve school meal quality by frontline staff.
			
			Increase in school frontline staff's perceptions of being able to improve meal quality at their school.
			
			Improved frontline staff skills related to meal quality.
				Increase in student ratings of school meal quality.
				
				Recommendations for improvement of the E-STAR Program.

• 6 1-hour Refresher Webinars • 8 CT Follow-Up Calls Frontline Staff • 16- 15-Minute Staff Trainings Rigorous Evaluation Plan and Tools	improvement action plans. Identified training barriers and challenges. Cost of training per participant.		Increased student and frontline staff engagement in efforts to improve meal quality.	

II.   FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

A. Total Amount of Funding Expected to Award

In FY 2019, up to $6.0 million in funding is anticipated for Team Nutrition E-STAR Grant.

B. Anticipated Award Amounts

FNS anticipates awarding this FY 2019 E-STAR grant to two State agencies. Up to $3,000,000 per State agency may be requested for executing this innovative workforce development and job skills training program with a rigorous evaluation over a period of four years. FNS reserves the right to make greater or fewer grant awards based upon the level of funding requested, the quality of applications received, or other Agency priorities. The submission of an application does NOT guarantee funding. FNS reserves the right to reduce, increase, or revise proposed budgets based on the availability of funds.

State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program are eligible to apply that have a minimum of 400 managers that can participate is this grant. Each Manager will provide training to a minimum of five Frontline staff. Smaller States (with less than 800 school buildings) may partner with one other State Agency (with less than 800 school buildings) to apply to this grant opportunity. However, one state would need to take the lead and the other be a sub-grant recipient. Together, they would need to have the minimum of 400 managers to participate in this grant.

C. Anticipated Start Dates and Period of Performance

Through a competitive grants process, FY 2019 Team Nutrition E-STAR Training Grants will be funded for the period of September 30, 2019 - September 30, 2023.

D. Type of Federal Financial Assistance

Funding for approved Team Nutrition Training Grant E-STAR will be provided through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, upon receipt of a fully executed grant agreement between USDA Food and Nutrition Service and the grantee. These awards are subject to availability of funding. FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants this or subsequent fiscal years should additional funds become available. All School Nutrition Training Grant funds must be obligated and all activities under must be fully completed by September 30, 2023.

E. Use of Grant Funds-Allowable Costs

All requested costs must be allowable, allocable, necessary, and reasonable in accordance with new OMB Code of Federal Regulations Cost Principles as follows:
•   2 CFR Part 200: "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost   Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards"
•   2 CFR Part 400 "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards".

Among other costs, budgets may include expenses related to personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings.

Equipment and Supplies: Expenditures for both equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of $5,000 or more) and supplies are allowable expenses

Food Expenses: No more than 10 percent of the grant funds may be used for food purchases in the grant budget. Food purchases should be limited to educational and training purposes, including: sample tables, taste tests, or promotional use. Food costs related to conducting tests of new recipes or product are also deemed an appropriate use of funds. The Guidance for Interpreting Cost Principles for Grants and Sub-Grant Awards may provide more direction and can be found in APPENDIX B.

E. Grantee Requirements

1. E-STAR Program Support

To facilitate implementation of this innovative training initiative and ensure that selected participants meet the training-related obligations, Grantees must:

   a.   The State agency is responsible for overseeing and coordinating grant activities; providing fiscal oversight; and exercising effective internal control of funds that are

provided to a sub-contractor, school food authorities, and sub-grant recipients, including the appropriate use of the "Guidance for Interpreting Cost Principles for Grants and Sub-Grant Awards" listed in Appendix B.

b. The State Agency should identify a full-time Project Director and a full-time Social Scientist. Require CVs as part of the application PD- Nutrition Degree/ SS- experience with??From a university?

c. Secure appropriate training facilities for the one day orientation session and the 2.5 day workshop. The maximum number of school nutrition managers to attend each workshop is 60. Additional workshop sessions should be scheduled as needed to accommodate all selected participants.

d. Allocate grant funds to cover travel costs for all orientation and workshop participants (CTs and managers) including, but not limited to: transportation costs, hotel costs, and daily per diem.

e. Coordinate all workshop logistics and travel plans including, but not limited to: selecting training dates and locations (in collaboration with ICN), ensuring appropriate technology equipment at training facilities, coordinating participant travel arrangements, ensuring (in collaboration with ICN) that each participant receives the workshop materials. TNTG funds may be used to pay for food if the food is part of a specific training activity.

f. Schedule the workshop at a time most convenient to participants, ideally during breaks when school is not in session or in tandem with State association meetings.

g. Select and hire school nutrition professionals to serve as CTs for the duration of the grant period. These CTs must have school nutrition supervisory experience and have experience as a School Nutrition Director and/or Manager/Supervisor operating the School Meals Programs. The number of CTs required will depend on the number of school nutrition manager participants, in order to maintain a maximum ratio of CTs to managers of 1:10.

h. Ensure that all selected CTs and managers attend and participate in the required orientation and/or workshop. Develop and maintain appropriate mechanism to track attendance, participation, and completion of assignments.

i. Ensure that all selected CTs and managers meet obligations for quarterly consultations in years 2 and 3. Develop and maintain appropriate mechanism to track CT sessions.

j. Ensure that all selected managers provide, and frontline staff attend and participate in, the required 15 minute training sessions. Develop and maintain appropriate mechanism to track attendance, participation, and completion of assignments related to these trainings.

k. Provide plans for the retention of CTs and managers selected to participate throughout the grant's period of performance. Plan for maintaining manager and CT participation levels, if attrition occurs. Assure the completion of all reports and activities, in a timely fashion.

l. Refrain from providing any new training initiative related to school meal quality that is not required by relevant policy related to training standards to E-STAR or control group participants during the course of the grant period.

2. **Participant Selection and Recruitment**

To support the rigorous evaluation of the training intervention and follow-on activities, grantees are required to, in collaboration with FNS and their evaluation contractor, use a random selection process to identify and recruit E-STAR participants (i.e. CTs and school nutrition managers) as well as control school nutrition managers who will not be provided with access to this training, the standard STAR training or other new training initiative for the duration of the grant period.

The grantee shall recruit participant and control school nutrition managers in sufficient numbers, with no fewer than XXXX, to support a robust evaluation. CTs shall be hired to ensure that the maximum ratio of CTs to managers is 1:10. No CTs will be hired for the control SFAs.

In support of participant selection, Grantees must:

a. Use and/or provide SFA-level data to enable a stratified random sampling approach that will ensure that participants (and their associated or matched controls) reflect diverse SFA and/or school characteristics.

b. School nutrition managers that oversee multiple school buildings, will implement strategies and train frontline staff at only one of their school buildings.

c. Provide or help gather information to ensure that participants and controls are selected only from school nutrition managers who have not participated in previous ICN STAR training activities.

d. Support and facilitate the selection and recruitment of intervention and control SFAs, and school nutrition managers from those SFAs to serves as E-STAR participants or controls. Control school nutrition managers will be expected to participate in evaluation activities (surveys, activity tracking, and other data collection) without participation in the E-STAR program.

e. Obtain signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) from selected School Food Authorities agreeing to their managers' and schools participation in E-STAR.   Part of application pkg.

    f.   Scrupulously avoid providing new or additional training to the selected control school nutrition managers, apart from standard required trainings to remain in compliance with professional standards guidelines.

3. Evaluation Activities

Grantees are required to hire a Social Scientist who will work collaboratively with FNS and their evaluation contractor to design and execute an evaluation plan. There are two components to the evaluation: 1) Rigorous evaluation conducted by an evaluation contractor of the E-STAR training; and 2) Evaluations of the school-based interventions developed and implemented by E-STAR participants.

The rigorous evaluation conducted by the evaluation Contractor will focus on the effectiveness of the training program for improving knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy among participants, compared to control school nutrition managers.

The evaluation of school-based interventions will be carried out by the Grantee-hired social scientist, with technical assistance from the Contractor, to measure impacts of the specific interventions identified and implemented by the school nutrition managers (with some comparison measures collected from control schools matched with support from the Contractor). All data collected for these evaluations, and any analyses conducted, will be shared with the Contractor to inform the final evaluation reporting.

The Grantee shall hire an evaluation specialist with an advanced degree in social science or similar discipline with training and experience in program evaluation. This evaluation specialist will be responsible for most of the Grant requirements described below.

In support of each evaluation component, Grantees must:

Requirements for E-STAR Training Evaluation (Contractor-led)

    a.   Provide the evaluation Contractor with administrative data for sampling, and for analysis of participant and control SFAs over the duration of the grant period.

    b.   Track all outputs that result from the training (including individual adherence to requirements described above for trainings, mentoring, etc.). Provide this information to the Contractor in the specified format.

    c.   Describe, monitor and track similar/relevant activity in treatment and control SFAs, e.g. trainings, school-based interventions, ad hoc grants, etc. Provide this information to the Contractor in the specified format.

    d.   Track and provide full accounting of costs associated with participation in the E-STAR training program and any training costs incurred by control SFAs. Provide this information to the Contractor in the specified format.

e. Facilitate access to participants and controls for qualitative and observational data collection to inform a process evaluation and capture the perspectives of participants.

Requirements for School-Based Intervention Evaluation(s) (Grantee-led)

a. Ensure IRB approval as required by State and local entities for data collection.

b. Track all activities carried out in schools as a result of participation in the E-STAR training, in a manner developed in coordination with the Contractor to ensure consistent reporting across Grantees. Describe, monitor and track similar/relevant activity in control schools, e.g. changes to meal preparation, food presentation, student engagement in school nutrition processes, school meal marketing efforts, etc.

c. In collaboration with the Contractor, identify/develop instruments to measure selected metrics, including student satisfaction and other relevant measures of school meal quality.

d. Conduct data collection in schools where school-based interventions are implemented (and matched control schools) for student satisfaction and control schools at key intervals.

e. Share data with the Contractor for subsequent analysis and reporting.

f. Conduct analysis of data related to school-based strategies.

g. Contribute to Final Grantee report to share findings related to school-based interventions. Reporting shall include narrative descriptions of school-based strategies, reactions to these strategies by school staff, students, and other stakeholders, and quantitative results describing observed changes in student perceptions.

Grantees may propose additional evaluation components to enhance understanding of the outcomes and impacts associated with the school-based strategies selected and implemented.

4. **Grantee Reporting and Dissemination**

a. Grantees are required to submit quarterly and annual performance reports.
b. Grantees are encouraged to have their social scientist present findings from the TNTG E-STAR grant at conferences, write and submit articles for publication, etc.
c. Elaborate- meetings with FNS; Abstract submissions/ Conference Presentations

III.   ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible Applicants

Only State agencies that administer the NSLP may submit an application in response to this solicitation. Each State may submit only one application on behalf of all interested Child Nutrition State agencies within that State. Each State may apply to only one TNTG FY 19 RFA.

State agency applications must include signed MOU's that indicate they have the minimum number of SFA's/ Managers required to participate in E-STAR.

Pre-application Screening Requirements

In reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, Federal Awarding Agencies, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.400, are required, prior to making a Federal award, to review information available through various OMB-designated repositories for eligibility qualification or financial integrity, and to have in place a framework for evaluating the risks posed by applicants before they receive Federal awards. The evaluation of the information obtained from the designated repository systems and the risk assessment may result in the Food and Nutrition Service Agency (FNS) imposing special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed. The Federal repository systems FNS will review include:

1) SAM, the *System for Award Management*, the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS;
2) FAPIIS, the *Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System*, is a database that has been established to track contractor misconduct and performance;
3) Dun and Bradstreet, the system where applicants establish a DUNS number which is used by the Federal government to better identify related organizations that are receiving

funding under grants and cooperative agreements, and to provide consistent name and address data for electronic grant application systems. The Federal government requires that all applicants for Federal grants and cooperative agreements with the exception of individuals other than sole proprietors have a DUNS number.

Applicants must also respond to the pre-application assessment questions below to allow FNS to evaluate aspects of the applicant's financial stability, quality of management systems, and history of performance, reports and findings from audits. A questionnaire containing these questions has been provided to facilitate the process. Applicants must answer all the pre-application questions. While answering "yes" may be an indicator of risk, the consideration and evaluation of these questions is only an indicator of potential risk and may or may not result in an additional oversight requirements or special conditions be placed on an award should an award be made. Decisions regarding additional oversight requirements will take into consideration the total number of risks identified.

1. **Acknowledge USDA support:** As outlined in 2 CFR 415.2, grant recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA Food and Nutrition Service support on any publications written or published with grant support and, if feasible, on any publication reporting the results of, or describing, a grant-supported activity. Recipients shall include acknowledgement of USDA Food and Nutrition Service support on any audiovisual which is produced with grant support and which has a direct production cost of over $5,000.
   o When acknowledging USDA support, use the following language: "This material is based upon work that is supported by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture." Grantees are asked to follow the USDA Visual Standards Guide when using the USDA logo.

Grant recipients *ma*y be asked to host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Applicants may request paper copy of this solicitation and required forms by contacting the FNS Grants Officer at:

Anna Arrowsmith, Grant Officer
Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22302
E-mail Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.fns.gov

2. Content and form of application submission (form and format of application submissions)

This section must address the required content of an application and the forms or format that the applicant must use to submit. This section must include the required forms to be submitted.

FNS strongly encourages eligible applicants interested in applying to this program to adhere to the following applicant format. The proposed project plan should be typed on 8 ½" X 11" white paper with at least 1 inch margins on the top and bottom. All pages should be single-spaced, in 12 point font. The project description with relevant information should be captured on no more than *(add the number of pages)* pages, not including the cover sheet, table of contents, resumes, letter(s) of commitment, endorsement letter(s), budget narrative(s), appendices, and required forms. All pages, excluding the form pages, must be numbered.

Special Instructions:

- Letters of Commitment?
- State agency applications must include signed MOU's that indicate they have the minimum number of SFA's/ Managers required to participate in E-STAR.
- Late application submission will not be considered in this competition. FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications once they are received.
- Applications submitted without the required supporting documents, forms, certification will not be considered.
- Applications not submitted via the Grants.gov portal will not be considered.
- If multiple application packages are submitted through the grants.gov web portal by the same applicant in response to this solicitation, FNS will accept the latest application package successfully submitted. All other packages submitted by the applicant will be removed from this competition.
- FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants in the next fiscal year should additional funds be made available.
- Grant awards are contingent upon the availability of Federal funds.
- FNS reserves the right to make greater or fewer grant awards based upon the level of funding requested, the quality of applications received, or other Agency priorities. The submission of an application does NOT guarantee funding. FNS reserves the right to reduce, increase, or revise proposed budgets based on the availability of funds.
- There is no requirement for cost sharing or matching; therefore, this will not be considered in the review process.
- All documents in the application should be in Portable Document Format (PDF)
- *Indicate if a specific software package should be used to submit application package.*

The application should follow this format:

1. Introductory Materials (maximum 3 pages)
2. Abstract (maximum 1 page)
3. Training Initiative Outline and implementation plan, CT and Manager Recruitment Plan, and Evaluation Plan (maximum 10 pages)
   a. Must include the Activities/Indicators Tracker
4. Communications/ Marketing Plan for recruitment and retention (maximum 2 pages)
5. Chronological Timeline (maximum 2 pages)
6. Key Personnel/Staffing Plan (include CVs in Appendices), Partnerships, and Collaborations Overview (maximum 4 pages)
7. Management Plan (maximum 5 pages)

8. Budget, and Budget Justification Narrative (no maximum)
9. Appendices (no maximum)
10. Signed MOU's (no maximums)

Grant applications should not exceed XX pages. Use of this format will make it easier for grant reviewers to locate the requested information and to evaluate each application.

Applications must include a thorough description of the proposed workforce development and training initiative and include all grant requirements. Applications must include the following components:

1. **Introductory Materials:**
   a. **Cover sheet: Attachment F.** Designate a single point of contact for your application. Provide the individual's name, job title, mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e- mail address.
   b. **Title Page and Project Summary:** Include a concise summary of your project
   c. **Table of Contents:** Include the title and page number of each required section of the appendix and page numbers.

Application Project Summary
The application should clearly describe the proposed project activities and anticipated outcomes that would result if the proposal is funded- modify

Project Narrative
The project narrative should clearly identify what the applicant is proposing and how it will address a solution, the expected results and/or benefits once the solution is achieved, and how it will meet the RFA program scope and objectives. The proposed project methodology should describe the project design, address program specific methodology needs, procedures, timetables, monitoring/oversight, and the organization's project staffing. *It should also address any additional RFA specific requirements.*

Activities/Indicators Tracker- modify???
Proposed Activities and indicators measuring success must be mapped to Program Objectives (as described in Section II – Federal Award Information) in the below format (note that additional Activities/Indicators can be added as needed). Note: Indicators are defined as any metric you anticipate will be able to be tracked during the period of performance of the grant.

Objective <enter #>:	
Proposed Activity 1:	
Indicator 1:	
Indicator 2:	
Proposed Activity 2:	

Indicator 1:	
Indicator 2:	

Objective <enter #>:	
Proposed Activity 1:	
Indicator 1:	
Indicator 2:	
Proposed Activity 2:	
Indicator 1:	
Indicator 2:	

<u>Application Budget Narrative</u>

The budget narrative should correspond with the proposed project narrative and application budget. The narrative must justify and support the bona fide needs of the budget's direct cost. If the budget includes indirect costs, the applicant must provide a copy of its most recently approved Federal indirect cost rate agreement. All non-profit organizations must include their 501(c)(3) determination letter issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

Indirect Cost Rate: If available, the current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), negotiated with a Federal negotiating agency, should be used. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rateApplicants should submit a copy of their NICRA with their application package if indirect costs are requested.

<u>Required Grant Application Forms</u>

Please refer to the Application Checklist on page XX for a list of required grant forms.

LETTER OF INTENT

The eligible applicant that intends to submit an application should submit a Letter of Intent notice by (insert the date). This notice does not obligate the applicant to submit an application but provides FNS with useful information in preparing for the review and selection process. The notice should include the potential applicant's name and address, organization's name, telephone number, and e-mail address of the primary point of contact. The applicant can send the letter via e-mail to the FNS Grants Officer identified below:

<div align="center">

Anna Arrowsmith
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail: Anna.Arrowsmith@fns.usda.gov

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Submission Date

Complete grant applications must be uploaded to www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern

Standard Time (EST), on XXXX XX, XXXX.
- Late applications will not be considered.
- FNS will not consider additions or revisions to applications once they are submitted.
- Applications must be submitted via the Grants.gov web portal. Mailed, e-mailed or hand-delivered application packages will not be accepted.
- Grant awards are subject to the availability of funding and/or appropriations of funds.
- FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award additional grants this or subsequent fiscal years should additional funds become available.

USDA strongly encourages applicants to begin the process at least **four weeks before** the due date and to submit applications to Grants.gov at least **one week** before the deadline to allow time to troubleshoot any issues, should they arise. The grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting an application to www.grants.gov should contact the grant support team listed in Section XX: Agency Contacts.

Electronic Submission Details

Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to www.grants.gov should contact the grant support team noted in Section XXX: Agency Contacts.

In order to submit an application, you must:

1. Obtain a **DUNS** number
   - In order to obtain a DUNS number, if your organization does not have one, or if you are unsure of your organization's number, contact Dun and Bradstreet via the internet at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform or by calling 1-888-814-1435, Monday thru Friday, 8am-9pm ET. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number.
   - **It may take 2-3 business days to obtain a DUNS number.**

2. Register in the System for Award Management (**SAM)**
   - SAM combines Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. For additional information regarding SAM, see the following link: https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/.https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/
   - Must have organization's DUNS, entity's Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on last tax return). **It may take 3-5 business days to register in SAM, however** in some instances the SAM process to complete the migration of permissions and/or the renewal of the entity record will require **5-7 days or more**.
   - All applicants must have current SAM status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a Federal Award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25.
   - We strongly encourage applicants to begin the process **at least 3 weeks** before the due date of the grant solicitation.

3. Create a Grants.gov Account: The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to

complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-3-username-password.html

4. Authorize Grants.gov Roles: After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying them of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online anytime after you have been approved as an AOR. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-4-aor-authorization.html

5. Track Role Status: To track your role request, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-5-track-aor-status.html

b. *Electronic Signature*: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as an AOR; **this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

How to Submit an Application via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement (FOA), you can create individual instances of a workspace.
Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html

1) *Create a Workspace*: Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

2) *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.
a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out web forms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other

Standard forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html

b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms:* In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First*: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

2) *Submit a Workspace*: An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package <u>at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date</u> to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

3) *Track a Workspace*: After successfully submitting a workspace package, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the package. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html
Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist the Center with tracking your issue and understanding background information on the issue.

4. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission
a. *Online Submission.* All applications must be received by 11:59 PM, Eastern Standard Time (EST), on the due date established for each program. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When the Food and Nutrition Service successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by the Food and Nutrition Service.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

Additional Information on Grants.gov and the Registration Process:

NOTICE: Special Characters not Supported

All applicants **MUST** follow grants.gov guidance on file naming conventions. To avoid submission issues, please follow the guidance provided in the grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

Are there restrictions on file names for any attachment I include with my application package?

File attachment names longer than approximately 50 characters can cause problems processing packages. Please limit file attachment names. Also, do not use any special characters (example: &,–,*, %, /, #', -), this includes periods (.), spacing followed by a dash in the file and for word separation, use underscore (example: Attached_File.pdf) in naming the attachments. **Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application will be rejected. FNS will not accept any application rejected from www.grants.gov portal due to incorrect naming conventions.**

In order to submit an application via grants.gov, applicants must have obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registered in both the new Systems for Award Management (SAM) and on grants.gov. The applicant is strongly advised to allow ample time to initiate the grants.gov application submission process. All applicants must have SAM status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a federal award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25. Please visit the following websites to obtain additional information on how to obtain a DUNS number (www.dnb.com) and register in SAM (https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/).

Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; you need to be sure that you have confirmation that the application was accepted. For tools and tips regarding

www.grants.gov, please visit: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html.

Additional information and applicant resources is available at:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

LETTER OF INTENT
The eligible applicant that intends to submit an application should submit a Letter of Intent notice by (insert the date). This notice does not obligate the applicant to submit an application but provides FNS with useful information in preparing for the review and selection process. The notice should include the potential applicant's name and address, organization's name, telephone number, and e-mail address of the primary point of contact. The applicant can send the letter via e-mail to the FNS Grants Officer identified below:

<div align="center">

Anna Arrowsmith
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail: Anna.Arrowsmith@fns.usda.gov

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Pre-award costs <u>will not</u> be awarded for this grant project.

3. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to www.grants.gov should contact the grants.gov Support Center at **Local Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726 or via e-mail at** support@Grants.gov.

Additional submission information and instructions is available at:
 https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/grantors/grantor-standard-language.html

 V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review Criteria

EVALUATION OF GRANT APPLICATION CRITERIA

FNS will pre-screen all applications to ensure the applicants are eligible entities and are in compliance with all Program regulations. FNS will not approve any waivers from Program regulations for any projects submitted in response to this solicitation.

Evaluation Factors and Criteria

The following selection criteria will be used to evaluate applications for this RFA. The evaluation factors include the following:

Overall Approach: Does the applicant provide a specific and feasible plan for providing the E-STAR Training? Is there a clear description of the methodology for sampling and recruiting school nutrition managers that have not previously participated in ICN's STAR program? Is it likely, based upon the approach, that the applicant will be able to recruit and retain enough qualified CTs for the training program? If sub-grants are provided, is there a plan for awarding and monitoring the use of the funds? What is the strength of the collaborative relationship with a research/academic entity with appropriate research experience? (25%)

Feasibility: Overall approach is reasonable and appropriate while demonstrating: experience and ability in the areas of school nutrition training; coordination of efforts among multiple School Food Authorities; capacity to follow-up with CTs and school nutrition managers; and plans for attrition of school nutrition managers, CTs, and frontline staff during the course of the grant period. (25%)

Staffing/Budget/Timeline: Is the budget consistent with objectives and timelines. Are the amount of funds allocated for staffing and activities reasonable and necessary? Are the Project Director, Social Scientist, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project and have appropriate experience and training? Do the Project Director and Social Scientist devote enough time for the grant? Do contingency plans exist for continuing the project if key personnel such as the project director or social scientist leaves the project. (25%)

Evaluation Design: Does the applicant's acknowledge the successes and failures of past research in the literature and use such knowledge in the design of the evaluation plan? Is the training program likely to have high participation and/or adherence rates? Are the proposed recruitment and retention strategies adequate? Is the sample size adequate and is the study adequately powered to detect intervention effects? Are there sufficient evidence and justification that the effect size can be achieved through the proposed intervention in the allotted time in the proposed study population? Are the statistical analyses appropriate for the design and unit of randomization selected? Are the informed consent procedures, data collection, quality control, and data management appropriate? (25%)

*Human Subjects Protection: Not part of the scoring, but will disqualify a proposal if inadequate (defined as any actual or potential unacceptable risk, or inadequate protection against risk, to human subjects as described in any portion of the application).

NOTE: If you are requiring information from the applicant not contained on www.grants.gov (such as letters of support, resumes, vitas, etc…), please indicate these requirements within the appropriate evaluation and selection criteria. Please inform panel members to score incomplete applications appropriately.

2. Review and Selection Process

Following the initial screening process, FNS will assemble a panel group to review and
determine the technical merits of each application. The panel will evaluate the proposals
based on how well they address the required application components and array the
applications from highest to lowest score. The panel members will recommend applications
for consideration for a grant award based on the evaluation scoring. The selecting official
reserves the right to accept the panel's recommendation or to select an application for
funding out of order to meet agency priorities, program balance, geographical representation,
or project diversity FNS reserves the right to use this solicitation and competition to award
additional grants in the next fiscal year should additional funds be made available.

NOTE: If a discrepancy exists between the total funding request (submitted on SF-424, SF-
424A, and budget or budget narrative) within the application package in response to this
solicitation, FNS will <u>only</u> consider and evaluate the estimated funding request contained on
SF-424.

3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates (OPTIONAL)

If known, indicated the anticipated date the selected applicants will be announced by FNS. Also,
include the grant project award dates.

VI.   FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notice

Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions; any contact
from a FNS grants or program officer should not be considered as a notice of a grant award.   No
pre-award or pre-agreement costs incurred prior to the effective start date are allowed unless
approved and stated on FNS' signed award document.

The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this RFA. Only the
recognized FNS authorized signature can bind the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service to the
expenditure of funds related to an award's approved budget.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

CONFIDENTIALITY OF AN APPLICATION

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of FNS transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Under the Privacy Act of 1974, information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. Furthermore, the applications for authorization contain personally identifying information on individuals doing business with Food and Nutrition Service. Therefore, the Food and Nutrition Service published USDA e-Authentication Service (system of records) July 26, 2006 in the Federal Register Volume 71 page 42346 to specify the uses to be made of the information in this collection. Access to records is limited to those persons who process the records for the specific uses stated in this Privacy Act notice. Records are kept in physically secured rooms and/or cabinets. Paper records are segregated and physically secured in located cabinets. Various methods of computer security limit access to records in automated databases. Any application that does not result in an award will be not released to the public. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records, and any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information (National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) SP 800-122, Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable information, April 2010).

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records, and any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information (National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) SP 800-122, Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable information, April 2010).

Applicants submitting applications in response to this RFA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. All federal and non-federal employees (e.g., contractors, affiliates, or partners) working for or on behalf of FNS are required to acknowledge understanding of their responsibilities and accountability for using and protecting FNS PII in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974; Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-06-15, *Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information; M-06-16, Protection of Sensitive Agency Information*; M-07-16, *Safeguarding Against and Responding to the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information*; and the NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-122, *Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information*.

By submitting an application in response to this RFA, applicants are assuring that all data exchanges conducted throughout the application submission and pre-award process (and during the performance of the grant, if awarded) will be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable Federal laws. By submitting a grant application, applicants agree to take all necessary steps to protect such confidentiality, including the following: (1) ensuring that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained or otherwise associated with UDSA FNS funded grants is securely transmitted. Transmission of applications through Grants.gov is secure; (2) ensuring that PII is not transmitted to unauthorized users, and that PII and other sensitive data is not submitted via email; and (3) Data transmitted via approved file sharing services (WatchDox, ShareFile, etc.), CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, etc., must be encrypted.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

The agency requires all panel reviewers to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality form to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect the application review and evaluation process. Names of applicants, including States and tribal governments, submitting an application will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of the reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Federal Tax Liabilities Restrictions

None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

Felony Crime Conviction Restrictions

None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

Debarment and Suspension 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417

A recipient chosen for an award shall comply with the non-procurement debarment and suspension common rule implementing Executive Orders (E.O.) 12549 and 12669, "Debarment

and Suspension," codified at 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417. This common rule restricts sub-awards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. The approved grant recipient will be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a sub-grant award by checking the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov.

Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

Effective October 1, 2010, all grant applicants must obtain a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number as a universal identifier for Federal financial assistance.   Active grant recipients and their direct sub-recipients of a sub-grant award also must obtain a DUNS number. To request a DUNS number visit: http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.

The grant recipient must also register its DUNS number in the new Systems for Award Management (SAM). If you were registered in the CCR, your company's information is already in SAM and you will just need to set up a SAM account. To register in SAM you will need your entity's DUNS and your entity's Tax ID Number (TIN) and taxpayer name (as it appears on your last tax return). Registration should take **3-5 days**. If you do not receive confirmation that your SAM registration is complete, please contact SAM at https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list.

FNS may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with the requirements described in 2 CFR 25 to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active SAM registration with current information.

Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information 2 CFR Part 170

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006 (Public Law 109–282), as amended by Section 6202 of Public Law 110–252 requires primary grantees of Federal grants and cooperative agreements to report information on sub-grantee obligations and executive compensation. FFATA promotes open government by enhancing the Federal Government's accountability for its stewardship of public resources. This is accomplished by making Government information, particularly information on Federal spending, accessible to the general public.

Primary grantees, including State agencies, are required to report actions taken on or after October 1, 2010, that obligates $25,000 or more in Federal grant funds to first- tier sub-grantees. This information must be reported in the Government-wide FFATA Sub-Award Reporting System (FSRS). In order to access FSRS a current SAM registration is required. A primary grantee and first-tier sub-grantees must also report total compensation for each of its five most-highly compensated executives. Every primary and first-tier grantee must obtain a DUNS number prior to being eligible to receive a grant or sub-grant award. Additional information will be provided to grant recipients upon award.

Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, Public Law 110-417

Section 872 of this Act requires the development and maintenance of a Federal Government information system that contains specific information on the integrity and performance of covered Federal agency contractors and grantees. The Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) was developed to address these requirements. FAPIIS contains integrity and performance information from the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System, information from the SAM database, and suspension and debarment information from the SAM. FNS will review and consider any information about the applicant reflected in FAPIIS when making a judgment about whether an applicant is qualified to receive an award.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

The Freedom of Information ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, provides individuals with a right to access records in the possession of the Federal Government. The Government may withhold information pursuant to the nine exemptions and the three exclusions contained in the Act.

Application packages submitted in response to this grant solicitation may be subject to FOIA by requests by interested parties. In response to these requests, FNS will comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including departmental regulations.

FNS will forward a Business Submitter Notice to the requested applicant's point-of-contact. Applicants will need to review requested materials and submit and submit any recommendations within 10 days from the date of FNS notification. FNS will redact Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

For additional information on the Freedom of Information (FOIA) process, please contact Jennifer Weatherly, FNS Freedom of Information Act officer at FOIA@fns.usda.gov.

Privacy Policy

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service does not collect any personal identifiable information without explicit consent. To view the Agency's Privacy Policy, visit: www.fns.usda.gov/privacy-policy.

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following regulations 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II. Any Federal laws, regulations, or USDA directives released after this RFA is posted will be implemented as instructed.

Government-wide Regulations
- 2 CFR Part 25: "Universal Identifier and System for Award Management"
- 2 CFR Part 170: "Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information"
- 2 CFR Part 175: "Award Term for Trafficking in Persons"

- 2 CFR Part 180: "OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)"
- 2 CFR Part 200: "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards"
- 2 CFR Part 400: USDA's implementing regulation of 2 CFR Part 200 "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards"
- 2 CFR Part 415: USDA "General Program Administrative Regulations"
- 2 CFR Part 416: USDA "General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments"
- 2 CFR Part 417: USDA "Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension"
- 2 CFR Part 418 USDA "New Restrictions on Lobbying
- 2 CFR Part 421: USDA "Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)"
- 41 U.S.C. Section 22 "Interest of Member of Congress"

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Public access to Federal Financial Assistance records shall not be limited, except when such records must be kept confidential and would have been excepted from disclosure pursuant to the "Freedom of Information" regulation (5 U.S.C. 552)

General Terms and Conditions of the award may be obtained electronically. Please contact the Grants Officer at:

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Anna Arrowsmith
Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail: Anna.Arrowsmith@fns.usda.gov

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3. Reporting

FINANCIAL REPORTING

The award recipient will be required to enter the SF-425 (Financial Status Report) into the FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS) on a quarterly basis. In order to access FPRS, the grant recipient must obtain USDA e-authentication certification and access to FPRS. For additional information on FPRS, visit: www.fprs.fns.usda.gov.

PROGRESS REPORTING

The recipient will be responsible for managing and monitoring the progress of the grant project activities and performance. Grantees will be required to submit quarterly, annual and final project reports.? The grant terms and conditions will indicate the reporting schedule for

submitting project performance/progress reports to FNS. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions, including results of the grant project.

VII. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this solicitation, please contact the Grants Officer at:

Anna Arrowsmith

Grant Officer, Grants and Fiscal Policy Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS
3101 Park Center Drive Room 740
Alexandra, VA 22301
E-mail: Anna.Arrowsmith@fns.usda.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Debriefing Requests

Non-selected applicants may request a debriefing to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of submitted proposals. Debriefing requests must be made to the Grant Officer, within thirty days after receipt of the grant decision. This information may be useful when preparing future grant proposals. Additional information on debriefing requests will be forwarded to non-selected applicants. The Food and Nutrition Service reserves the right to provide this debriefing orally or in written format.

RFA BUDGET NARRATIVE CHECKLIST

This checklist will assist you in completing the budget narrative portion of the application. Please review the checklist to ensure the items below are addressed in the budget narrative.

NOTE: The budget and budget narrative, as well as forms SF-424 and SF-424A must be in line with the proposal project description (statement of work) bona fide need. FNS reserves the right to request information not clearly addressed. All funding requests must be in whole dollars.

	YES	NO
Personnel		
Did you include all key employees paid for by this grant under this heading?		
Are employees of the applicant's organization identified by name and position title?		
Did you reflect percentage of time the Project Director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents (FTE)?		
Fringe Benefits		
Did you include your organization's fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation?		
Did you list the type of fringe benefits to be covered with Federal funds?		
Travel		
Are travel expenses itemized? For example origination/destination points, number and purpose of trips, number of staff traveling, mode of transportation and cost of each trip.		
Are the Attendee Objectives and travel justifications included in the narrative?		
Is the basis for the lodging estimates identified in the budget? For example include excerpt from travel regulations.		
Equipment		

Is the need for the equipment justified in the narrative?		
Are the types of equipment, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased listed in the budget?		
Is the basis for the cost per item or other basis of computation stated in the budget?		
Supplies		
Are the types of supplies, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased reflected in the budget?		
Is the basis for the costs per item or other basis of computation stated?		
Contractual: (FNS reserves the right to request information on all contractual awards and associated costs after the contract is awarded.)		
Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost for a contract or sub-grant expense(s) shown on the budget?		
A justification for all Sole-source contracts must be provided in the budget narrative prior to approving this identified cost.		
Other		
Consultant Services. – Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost shown on the budget. The following information must be provided in the justification: description of service, the consultant's name and an itemized list of all direct cost and fees, number of personnel including the position title (specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the costs), Number of estimated hours X hourly wages, and all expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered to the project.		
For all other line items listed under the "Other" heading. - List all items to be covered under this heading along with the methodology on how the applicant derived the costs to be charged to the program.		

Indirect Costs		
Has the applicant obtained a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a Federal Agency? If yes, a copy of the most resent and signed negotiated rate agreement must be provided along with the application.		
If no negotiated agreement exists, the basis and the details of the indirect costs to be requested should also be reflected in the budget.		

FOR GRANT APPLICANT USE ONLY. DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM WITH THE
   APPLICATION

Grant Program Accounting System & Financial

Capability Questionnaire

PURPOSE

Recipients of Federal funds must maintain adequate accounting systems that meet the criteria outlined in 2 CFR §200.302 Standards for Financial and Program Management. The responses to this questionnaire are used to assist in the Food and Nutrition Service Agency's (FNS) evaluation of your accounting system to ensure the adequate, appropriate, and transparent use of Federal funds. Failure to comply with the criteria outlined in the regulations above may preclude your organization from receiving an award. This form applies to FNS' competitive and noncompetitive grant programs. Please return this questionnaire with your application package to us.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Legal Organization Name:

D-U-Ns Number:

FINANCIAL STABILITY AND QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Requirement	Yes	No
1. Has your organization received a Federal award within the past 3 years?	☐	☐
2. Does your organization utilize accounting software to manage your financial records?	☐	☐
3. Does your accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of program funds separately for each grant?	☐	☐
4. Does your organization have a dedicated individual responsible for monitoring organizational funds, such as an accountant or a finance manager?	☐	☐
5. Does your organization separate the duties for staff handling the approval of transactions and the recording and payment of funds?	☐	☐

		Yes	No
6.	Does your organization have the ability to specifically identify and allocate employee effort to an applicable program?	☐	☐
7.	Does your organization have a property /inventory management system in place to track location and value of equipment purchased under the award?	☐	☐

AUDIT REPORTS AND FINDINGS

Requirement	Yes	No
1. Has your organization been audited within the last 5 fiscal years? *(If the answer is "Yes" and this report was issued under the Single Audit Act please note this in the box below marked "Additional Information" and if not issued under the "Single Audit Act", please attach a copy or provide a link to the audit report in the Hyperlink space below).*	☐	☐
2. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a "Qualified Opinion" or an "Adverse Opinion"?	☐	☐
3. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a "Material Weakness" disclosed?	☐	☐
4. If your organization has been audited within the last 5 fiscal years, was there a "Significant Deficiency" disclosed?	☐	☐

Hyperlink (if available):	

Additional information including expanding on responses in previous sections:

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

I certify that the above information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Authorized Representative's Signature and Date
Name:
Phone:
Email: